**TRIP PLANNING ESSENTIALS**

1. **Identify your objective river and work out long lead time logistics.**
   1. Research the area you will be in (guidebook, managing agency, other boaters).
   2. Consider all the restrictions: Secure a permit (if required). Timing is everything.
   3. Apply for permits – Identify common dates for your group.
2. Make sure to confirm your permit and pay all fees before due/ launch date.

* Be sure to acquire any other passes or permits needed for area (tribal lands, parking)

1. **Build your team** – Consider requiring cash deposit to reserve spot on a first come, first serve basis. Trip attendance spreadsheet? (consider inviting more people than permit can hold)
   1. Fill boatperson positions first (who has their own gear or is willing to rent and will be managing a boat)… Do you have confidence in these people? Will they show up on day of launch?
   2. 2nd string boatman – It’s never a bad idea to have a backup rower or two in case someone gets injured or falls ill. If inexperienced, are they willing to take instruction? (Support kayak?)
   3. EMT/ WFR/ Medical professional – This person may not always be *needed*, but is a very important role on **EVERY** trip, and can give peace of mind to trip attendees.
   4. Active Passengers – These people should add to the group dynamic, are easy to get along with and be willing to pitch-in (unload/ load boats, cook crews, groover duty etc). Ask boatperson if they are willing to take passengers, especially if new acquaintances.
2. **Make a plan**
   1. What type of trip do you want to run?
   2. What’s your departure, launch and return dates?
   3. How are you getting there/ back? Who will the drivers be?
   4. How is the gear getting there/ back?
   5. How will shuttle be run?
   6. How many days will you be on the river? How many days will transportation take?
   7. Are there specific camps you’d prefer over others?
   8. Does the group want to do other activities/ goals? (hiking, photography, ruins etc.)
3. **Make a gear list** – Remember, once you launch, what you have is what you have.
   1. Make a gear spreadsheet.
   2. Who’s bringing what?
   3. Are **all** your essential/ required gear covered? (groover, fire pan, repair, rescue, first aid, coolers, pump)
   4. How’s the kitchen going to work? Who’s providing?
   5. What gear are you missing?
   6. What personal gear will you bring? (You should also inform the group of what personal gear you suggest for climate, season etc.)
   7. How will trash be addressed?
4. **Consider expense sharing and Make a budget.** Some rivers have constraints in this regard. Costs will vary depending on trip. Discuss cost sharing tactics with participants and make sure they have a clear understanding of what they will be spending.
   1. Make a cost tracking spreadsheet.
   2. What is your group willing to pay per person?
   3. Estimated fuel costs/ shuttle cost.
   4. Will you have a “damaged gear” fund?
   5. Get everyone to pay **BEFORE** the trip departs, it can be difficult to collect payment after the fact.
5. **Build a menu**
   1. Build a menu spreadsheet.
   2. What type of eaters do you have? (light, heavy, vegan, vegetarian, gluten free, allergies, etc.)
   3. What type of meals do you want? (gourmet, easy to cook, or “just feed me”)
   4. Plan each day’s meals ahead of time and who will be cooking/preparing them.
   5. Purchase food and divide items into set meals for easier workflow in kitchen and to retain ice in coolers better.
   6. Pack coolers efficiently and notate what meals are in what cooler and what day you will be eating/preparing those meals.

* If on longer trips, try to minimize opening certain coolers to maximize your ice retention.

1. **Delegate responsibilities**
   1. Ask trip members which duties they’d prefer to oversee.
2. **Execute plan**
   1. Be prepared for hiccups, bumps in the road and delays. Not everything will go according to plan, so be patient and go with the flow and most importantly, HAVE FUN!
3. **Consider the Post-trip break-down and make sure everyone understands accounting.**
   1. Post trip party, photo sharing or reunion (make timely with trip end)
   2. Break-down and clean gear.
   3. Assess any damaged or lost gear.
   4. Refund any leftover funds to group members.
   5. Ask your group “What can we do better next time?
4. **Additional thoughts**
   1. Individuals with a good disposition = invite them on the next trip
   2. Live ‘n’ learn – Reflect on this trip to make the next one better